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CIA critics detail former history, warn of new dangers

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Opponents and watchdogs of the CIA Thursday came to the defense of ex-agent John Stockwell in a panel discussion which dealt the agency sharp criticism.

Morton Halperin, Sy Hersh and John Henry Faulk joined Stockwell to exchange views and reasons why each believes the CIA needs re-evaluation and overhauling.

Halperin, a member of the Center of National Securities Studies, centered his segment of the hour-long discussion on the CIA's effort to keep the American public from knowing what is occurring in the United States and of the illegal activities the CIA is involved in.

"They (the CIA) now have going a three-pronged campaign which people of this state (Texas) are at various times involved in," Halperin said.

One prong of the CIA's campaign is an attempt to "muzzle" former officials, like Stockwell, by suing those who make CIA operations known to the public, he said.

He added, however, the CIA has sued only its critics, while others, like Henry Kissinger, who have been close to national security interests and disclosed vital secrets, have not been hounded by the agency.

"It (the CIA) has sued them for injunctions that would prevent them from writing anything about the agency without the agency's permission.

"This is an effort to try to insure that we (the American public) will not in the future learn, as we have in the past, what the CIA has done in our name," Halperin said.

Another prong is the CIA's attempt to amend the Freedom of Information Act regulating public access to information compiled by the agency, he noted.

Under the act, the Church Commission was able to gain access to files documenting CIA involvement in testing drugs on "unsuspecting U.S." citizens, despite the agency's claim that all files on this operation had been destroyed.

"We've learned a great deal through the Freedom of Information Act about the way the CIA operates, about the way the press operates, and so the CIA proposes amending the Freedom of Information act so that we can no longer get that information," he said.

The third prong is an effort by the CIA, Sen. Lloyd Bentsen, D-Tex. and House Majority Leader Jim Wright of Texas to establish criminal penalties for people who reveal the names of CIA officials and CIA sources, because public revelation of agents' names would be potentially harmful to the agent.

Halperin argued there is no need to protect the names of agents because they are already readily available, and this law will only stifle future revelations about the CIA because names of operation leaders must be included in any expose on the agency.

"A statute that prohibited publication of information that might reveal the names of CIA agents could have the effect, and was intended to have the effect, of preventing former CIA officials from not only giving out a specific name, but from also talking about their particular experience and activities," he said.

Because of the CIA's attempt to keep the organization secret, Halperin believes the United States needs an alternative, independent intelligence-gathering service because the current CIA "can in no way be restructured."

Sy Hersh, *The New York Times* reporter who wrote stories about the CIA and catalyzed the Church Commission's investigation of the CIA in 1975, addressed the problems of keeping the public informed despite CIA regulations and scare tactics, and the personal courage it takes to make revelations like the ones Stockwell has.

"It's such a pernicious, vicious little attack to suppress the First Amendment and to suppress this kind of flexibility and freedom in our society that it's just staggering," Hersh said.

Legislation, such as amending the

FOIA and making it illegal to publish the names of CIA agents, will suppress informants on improper CIA operations, Hersh said.

He compared such actions to the purges of Russia in the '30s under Josef Stalin when people were afraid to speak against the government for fear the state police would haul them away from their beds at night.

"There's so much fear in an agency like (the CIA), that it is hard for people to go out. It takes an unusual kind of courage to go forward," he said.

Hersh asserted that there is a very basic confrontation between the First Amendment's protection of the people and an organization which acts in full secrecy from the public.

"They (the CIA) want to stop the kind of reporting I think is basically essential," he said.

"Who would these people (informants) turn to if there had been legislation like the CIA's wet dreams now has for what it wants," he asked.

Unlike the rest of the speakers, Hersh said the agency can work out its problems from within and believes it is feasible to have an effective intelligence service without the operational tactics now used by the CIA.

John Stockwell, who is being sued by the CIA for the royalties on his book "In Search of Enemies," said the CIA's existence since its inception after World War II has been only for men who wanted to continue in peacetime the atrocities they had performed under the rules of war.

"In war you can do things you can't do in peacetime. You can kill, you can arm

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